

## From the Editor:

It was 1994 and I was living in a third-floor, one bedroom walk-up apartment in Brookline and I had had enough. I was living by myself and working out of my apartment as an editor for a company in Connecticut. I was all alone - both in the apartment and in the city and I couldn't take the solitude anymore. It was lonely and boring. That spring, my mother told me that I could live in her Duxbury summer house temporarily, giving me the opportunity to figure out what I wanted to do in my life.

When I moved to Duxbury, my mom brought me to the Clipper offices to meet founder John Cutler, who, after seeing I had a bachelor's degree in print journalism from Boston University and six years of experience working for newspapers, promptly put me to work. He assigned me to do a Clipper visit - a one-person interview - with a young man who was a rising tennis star. From there, I wrote other feature stories until that day when editor Paula Maxwell asked me to cover the Board of Selectmen.

"I have done this for ten years, but I thought maybe it was time to have someone else do it," she told me at the time. I was shocked that anyone could write about the same committee for ten years thinking I would surely die of boredom from that, but since I had the experience writing about selectmen from my time at the weekly Medfield Suburban Press, and because I was between careers and eager to have a paycheck, I accepted.

That was 21 years ago.

During the intervening years, I have earned a master's degree in teaching, married a wonderful Duxbury man, taught English in a program for pregnant teens in Hingham, resigned from that job to start a family and take care of our two children and our home.

And during all those years, I have continued to write about selectmen. I have surpassed Paula's record by eleven years. I am very proud of that accomplishment but if you had told me back when I took this assignment that I would still be sitting in front of the selectmen and writing about their meetings two decades later, I would have laughed, incredulous.

Often when I tell people that I write about town government news, they make a face and say: "Oh. That's so boring."

I have never thought so. To me, it's actually the opposite because every week the selectmen are discussing and acting upon different issues. Of course, some stories come back annually and some topics can be monotonous, but usually there is always a new twist to ferret out and write about. Also, my years of reporting have allowed me to bring an historical perspective to my stories.

Looking back in my files, I have written about everything from the dredging of the harbor in 1996, to the opening of the new library in 1997, to the renovation of so many town buildings, such as the Ashdod fire station, the Wright building, the Tarkiln Community Center. Thousands more stories about thousands more issues are listed in neat dated rows on my computer.

The most memorable stories I have covered are the ones that affect people deeply. Two that come to mind are the time when a group of residents pushed the town to replace water mains leaching methyl tertiary-butyl ether, MBTE, a carcinogen, into the town's drinking water (we are still paying to replace those pipes) and also the acrimonious debate on the Board of Selectmen surrounding the firing of former police chief Mark Deluca.

I have been under the direction of more editors at the Clipper than I can remember after Paula left many years ago. Some were good, some were great. But they all had one thing in common—they all would leave eventually. Mostly they left because they were young and this job was a stepping stone on their career path.

Now it is my turn. Like everything in life, taking this job as editor is about timing. My children are in school now and, I've discovered that I have time on my hands. I am ready.

I have the experience and qualifications to do this job and the vision to move the Clipper forward. I know this town and love it, and, as many of you know, I have strong opinions about what goes on in Duxbury. I keep those opinions out of my news writing, but now, as editor, they might sneak out and find their way into print on occasion.

In these first weeks as the newest Clipper editor, I ask for your patience and your help. There is a lot to take in and understand about this job. One thing I've learned already is that it takes a village to fill a newspaper, so please continue to send in your news and pictures and story ideas. Feedback is essential and letters to the editor should be a constant. I will continue covering the selectmen and filling the paper with local news and do my best to write about our town in a way that is knowledgeable and enlightening.

I am looking forward to the challenge.

Susanna Sheehan